



**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

**Russ Chew 1-800-FAA-NEWS Phone Message  
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**Hello, this is Russ Chew with this week's update for April 14th**

Well, this week I'd like to focus on some early feedback from our ATO transition team's field-facility sessions. We know that the key to real change is to improve what goes on in the field operation, and this means that the only way our employees can really understand how to change is through our facility managers and supervisors.

This year's outreach effort, which we called "Leading Change in the ATO," is a four-hour hands-on session for managers and supervisors in the field. It's led by the ATO Change Management Team and directly involves SUPCOM managers and directors of operations. These sessions are traveling to our field facilities around the country and start with an informational briefing, followed by an interactive meeting where everyone can ask questions and give candid input on the ATO transition. So far, over 600 of our supervisors have participated.

Now, we use these to give everyone a better understanding of what we're trying to achieve with the ATO transition, but more importantly, to listen carefully so we get to know what concerns are on our supervisor's and manager's minds out in the field, and away from headquarters in Washington.

The Executive Council and I have been reviewing the early feedback and evaluations from those first 600 supervisors, and there were four common themes that I'd like to share with you.

1. We still need to do a better job of communicating with employees in the field.
2. It was often hard to understand the business sense behind some of our new policies.
3. Labor Relations needs to do a better job turning around employee action paperwork.
4. There was too much counter-productive micromanagement from above.

So let me start with communication. One of the things we have to do as individuals, as managers and supervisors, is to communicate regularly with each other – up, down, and among ourselves. So despite last year's effort to improve communications, session feedback still shows concern about inaccuracies and distortions still being spread in the workplace. And people said that they'd be willing to challenge these misrepresentations, but lacked specific information -- and so were reluctant to talk to employees without knowing more.

So even before we finish this year's outreach, we're going to launch a special 800 number for our supervisors and managers, so they can call in and get the latest facts and figures from the ATO vice presidents. With that knowledge, we'll be more effective in addressing employees' questions. And we'll also have a rapid-response, question-and-answer feedback mechanism, so supervisors and managers will be able to communicate what they want covered in future daily sessions. It's intended to be a fast 15-minutes-a-day, Monday through Friday. We'll make it short and to-the-point so you can get on with your day. Specific details will be coming by email next week to all of our ATO supervisors and managers.

The second issue was about how new policies were actually business-oriented, how or whether they create value for us. "Taxi into position and hold" was a common example given as such a policy. Now, I'll work with the VPs so that the business reasons behind these policies can be better communicated and made clearer for you. I know that if you really understood why these decisions were made, you wouldn't feel like you're "left holding the bag" when you try to give explanations.

OK, next was the timeliness on labor relations actions is still an issue. We've already fed this concern back to our senior FAA LR executives, and they've started working on solutions to this.

Now, the last issue is the toughest for us, and that is our "command and control" culture. How do we turn around decades of management culture that often guards information, micromanages, and assumes that people will do the wrong thing? As with many issues, the key to successful change is to tackle the underlying principles and assumptions that cause us to act the way we do.

This is not simple or easy, because it takes engaging in on-going, two-way, human-to-human communication; and it takes practice to get the process right. That's also why it takes so many years for real change to happen, even if "we're pedaling as fast as we can." In the end, I know we can do it together, but it will take a lot of communication, training, and a hard sustained effort by all of us to "row in the same direction" in the years to come.

So this week, I'd like to recognize those 600 plus supervisors who cared enough to share their candid opinions through our "Leading Change in the ATO"

sessions. You have my support as we work with each other, our employees, and your managers to create a better ATO. With better clarity of our ATO vision, coupled with the know-how and can-do spirit of our people, we'll be successful at managing our national airspace challenges together.

Well, that's it for this week. Thanks for listening, and I'll talk to you again next week.